

COMFORT ONE ANOTHER.

Comfort one another:

For the way is growing dreary,
The feet are often weary,
And the heart is very sad.
There is heavy burden-bearing,
When it seems that none are caring,
And we half forgot that ever we were glad.

Comfort one another:

With the hand-clasp close and tender,
With sweetness love can render,
And looks of friendly eyes.
Do not wait with grace unspoken,
While life's daily bread is broken,
Gentle speech is oft like manna from the skies.

Comfort one another:

There are words of music ringing
Down the ages, sweet as singing
Of the happy choir above.
Ransomed saint and mighty angel,
Lift the grand, deep-voiced evangel,
Where forever they are praising the eternal love.

Comfort one another:

By the hope of Him who sought us
In our peril—him who bought us,
Paying with His precious blood;
By the faith that will not alter,
Trusting strength that will not falter,
Leaning on the One divinely good.

Comfort one another:

Let the grave gloom lie beyond you,
While the Spirit's word remind you
Of the home beyond the tomb,
Where no more is pain or parting,
Fever's flush or tear-drop starting,
But the presence of the Lord, and for all his people
room. —Independent.

DAVID'S GREAT NEED.

SERMON BY J. F. HETRIC.

David had sinned. His sin was a dark stain upon his otherwise untarnished fame. He was accused of the Lord by the agency of Nathan the prophet. He had innocently pronounced his own sentence. He stood thus doubly condemned. God also accused him of having given the enemies of the Lord occasion to blaspheme. And then, as now, the enemies of God could overlook all that was noble in the life of David, and point to this great error of his life, and make it the occasion of blasphemous scoffing and mockery. The world has not improved in this respect. It is ever the same. But David was now thoroughly cognizant of his sin—awake to its dreadful magnitude. All its awful consequences staring him in the face. Like every awakened sinner he was now anxious for reconciliation with God. He wanted the sin removed. He desired to share the smile of God once more. His knowledge of God and his former experience taught him how to proceed. His depth of conviction gauged the depth of soul agony. His great desire to be free from his sin, measured his intense earnestness for pardon.

DAVID'S GREAT NEED.

He needed three things.

1. He needed his sins blotted out of God's book.
2. He needed to be washed thoroughly from his iniquity.
3. He needed the odor and stain of sin removed.

These three things are the need of all Adam's fallen race. The need of all sin corrupted humanity. None so good and moral but they have these same needs. None so bad but by grace they are entitled to them, and by faith share in the blessings which relief from these needs affords. The only inquiry is, do we want such relief? Is it really our desire to share in these special favors of God's boundless love? Is there a true, deep heartfelt want? A great, conscious hungering and thirsting after God's forgiving love and pardoning grace? Would that, God would by the Holy Spirit kindle in every heart such an intense burning, thirsting desire that would cause us to cry out in the language of David, "Have mercy upon me, O God according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." Such an earnest cry like this, such an intense earnestness kindled within us by the Holy Spirit, such as could not find utterance, would speedily enable us to cry out, "Bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name." David's conviction, his great experience of salvation, would soon give us his great heart of praise. God help us to have it.

1st Then, David's need to have HIS SINS BLOTTED OUT OF GOD'S BOOK.

Paul cried out at one time, "Oh wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He was sorely pressed by sin. He deeply felt his sin. He felt it as a body of death. He wanted deliverance. He found it. He cried out, I thank God through our Lord Jesus Christ." God could through Christ deliver him. So David's cry was a great and mighty cry. It was an all heart cry. It was a deep soul stirring, God-mourning cry. God heard it, was moved by it, and answered it.

Upon another occasion Paul found himself

peculiarly situated. He was in a strait betwixt two. He desired to depart and be with the Lord, which he felt was far better. Yet on the other hand to remain was better for the church. This was still in his heart. He wot not what to do. So, but in a different direction, with David. Before him was the great towering mountain of his sin, so high, so dense, so dark as to completely over-shadow his entire soul and obscure from his sight, for the time, all the light of the sun of righteousness that was arising with healing in his wings, for his relief. Behind him was the awful sin of his life. All its terrible significance entering into his soul and tearing it as with ten thousand iron claws. The remorse he felt. The misery of one single moment of such life must tear the soul asunder. Beneath him was the pit of mirey clay. His feet fast in it and sinking deeper and deeper into its horrible depths at each effort to extricate himself. Such was his condition. It might well overwhelm him. He might have gone mad. But he knew God's loving kindness and tender mercy. He was led to hope and he hoped not in vain.

This first part of our subject relates to God's remembrance of sin. His book kept by the angel recorder, in which man's sins are written against the transgressor. The dead small and great shall stand before God and be judged out of the books that shall be opened at the great day of final settlement. The Revelator, in his vision of the final judgment, saw these books opened. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books according to their works." David had knowledge of this matter. He had knowledge of God's record of his sin. He had knowledge of a day of settlement. He knew if his sin still remained uncancelled in God's book, he would be unable to render adequate satisfaction in God's day of reckoning. He was much desirous to have a credit entered on that book in his behalf. He wanted "paid" written in the margin. He desired that God would order the angel to dip his pen in the blood of the atonement and blot the hand-writing of sin that was against him. But he must depend on the free sovereign grace of God for such a blotting out. Hence, favor was sought by his great and mighty cry to God for deliverance. He met his creditors and sued for peace. He was going to the judge with his adversary and gave diligence to be delivered ere he was led to the officer. He did not want to wait till the law laid hold on him and took him by the throat, and with grim visage looked him sternly in the face and said, "Pay me that thou owest." He was like a wise business man, who knows that the person with whom he has been dealing, has a book account against him. He calls for settlement. Sees it all added up. Makes payment. Gets his receipt. Orders his creditor to blot the page. Sees it done. He is satisfied. He has met the claim. He is free. David was now calling upon God for settlement of his account. He knew there was much against him. He felt an intense anxiety to be free. He felt that ere long he must be seized with rigorous hand. His conscience was sensibly alive to his guilt. He called upon God and was heard. He saw by faith the margin marked "paid" and felt his freedom. He lived to sing his song of deliverance. "My tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness." Now he could sing in the full joy of his released soul, "Bless the Lord O my soul and all that is within me bless his holy name." He was like a man in the evening time of life with all his earthly affairs adjusted, waiting God's will to call him home.

How is it with us this morning? How are our accounts with the recording angel? If God will make inquisition of sin, will he find our account of short coming uncancelled? Have we become alarmed and called upon God for settlement? Are some of us yet waiting for a more "convenient season?" Still letting the indebtedness grow larger. Do we yet say from day to day, we will not yet call for settlement? Come now let us be wise. Let us see how it is. I am sure it will be larger than we think. It will strike us with awe. It will overwhelm us. Let us now say to God, "According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Let us fill our mouths with arguments. Let the whole plea be Jesus and Jesus alone. Let us say, "Jesus paid it all, yes all to him I owe." And now "Lord thou canst be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Then I am sure we shall go hence, and no doubt be written against us.

2. He needed to be washed

THOROUGHLY FROM HIS INIQUITY.

When the sin was off God's book, when it was blotted out there, much was

done in David's case. Much was done to restore him again to God's favor. The burden of debt was gone. Much still remained. The filthiness of sin was still in his heart. The unclean birds were out of the cage, but the cage was unclean. It needed cleansing. A clean bird could not live there yet. The seven devils were out of Mary's heart. Their filthy tracks remained. The legion of devils had left the soul of the demoniac of Gadara, but the filthy slime of their former revels was left behind. They had gone to the bottom of the sea but had left their impress behind, so David was not yet through the whole process which he needed. He was not the fit temple for God's indwelling through the spirit. This he desired. He recognized his adaptation for the indwelling spirit if he could but be made clean. Hence, he pleads for washing at God's hands. He wanted God to apply to him the "fullers soap." He had reasoned with God and recognized his sin to be as scarlet, he wanted them white as snow. He saw them to be red like crimson, he wanted them white as wool. He saw his hands red with Uriah's blood. He viewed it with dismay, and said, "out with you, but it would not out." The blood guiltiness was still there. He desired it away. He wanted God to wash him. He felt that he needed more than an ordinary washing. He must be thoroughly washed. "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity." He was like a garment very much soiled. It requires thorough washing. Again and again and yet another time the washer dips it into the suds. Scours it many times. Then applies clean water and thus continues the process till the work is thoroughly done. At last the garment is clean; it is fit for use again. David understood this human process. He desired the divine washer to treat him so. No halt work for him. Nothing but pure whiteness. "Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow, whiter than snow, yes whiter than snow."

David presents to us the picture of a man fully aroused to the filthiness of sin. Thoroughly awake to his uncleanness. It is a sad state to find the sweet singer of Israel in, but it is a blessed thing to find him seeking for a clean heart, and the renewal of a right spirit. How is it with us, dear friends, this morning? Are we all of us "thoroughly washed?" Let us take a lighted candle and go down into the soul. Let us take the caleym light of God's word and enter the deep recesses of the soul. Explore its silent corridors. Look into every cranny and every chink. Look into the dark corners. Drive out the moles and bats of worldliness and pride and see if all is clean where they hide. Is all clean? No the cry is, unclean, unclean, UNCLEAN. How unclean we are at times. How unclean the heart of the man who held silent meditation of sin last night. Thorough, thorough washing he must have. The person who told a falsehood, who blasphemed, who slandered his neighbor. How that person needs to be washed and rinsed. How he needed the mighty washer at him. The person that done some mean action, his whole being corrupted, he is all unclean. The man that was drunk and done great sins, like David, he, is unclean all over, all through. O how he needs a mighty washing. Pray that God may go at him. Let God at him with hyssop; let his soul be "sprinkled from an evil conscience and his body be washed in pure water."

Brethren, see to it, that your sin is not only cancelled in God's book, but that you are washed from your uncleanness. Thoroughly washed from your guilt. See to it, that the Great Washer has had you in the blood-cleansing fountain of the atonement. See that your garments are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. O that our song may be,

"Washed in blood,
In the soul cleansing blood of the lamb."

God grant you that it may be for us

"To sweep through the gates of the Jerusalem,
Washed in the blood of the lamb."

3. He needed the odor and

STAIN OF SIN REMOVED.

"Sin does not only leave a man unclean so that he needs washing, but it leaves a stain wherever it touches. A stain, too, that often will not wash out, a stain that needs something more than washing to remove. David knew this; he could realize the terrible stain sin left on his soul. He was very anxious that this should be removed. He did not only want that there should be nothing written against him in God's book, but that he should be washed, thoroughly washed from the uncleanness of iniquity. He wanted more. He wished to be cleansed from the stain and odor of his sin; he desired God to make a finished work of his case; he wanted an end made of the matter for all time to come. He hated the garments spotted by the flesh. The stain of lust and murder was to be removed. How often have the blood stained garments of the murderer betrayed him. How often

have they been brought into court and there appeared an unquestioned and unquestionable witness against him. Silent it is true, but nevertheless potent. With voiceless lips they spoke in a language unerring in its import, incontestable as truth itself. The jury saw it and made it the basis of their verdict. The prisoner beheld it and stood self-condemned. He knew there was no way of escape; he wanted God to cleanse his sin stained soul; he was willing to enter the valley of affliction and then be rid of his spot. Many a stain is in a garment when it is otherwise clean. How does the wash lady get it out? She lays it out to bleach. Bleach it out in the sun. If that fails then apply the acid. David was willing that God should bleach it out of him, or try the bitter acid of sorrow; the scalding, burning tear would help.

Many a person has formed an evil habit that is only broken up by affliction. The current of his thoughts must be changed; his powers must be suspended for the time, ere he can escape. At last he is free; at what a fearful cost. Israel became idolatrous; they did not cease from it; they were carried into a strange land; they were wasted amidst the idols of other nations. They must have more than a homeopathic dose. They got it; their hearts got sick of idols. God permitted their enemies to mock them; they asked them to sing a song of Zion. They needed to be weary; they were weary. Oh how weary. They cried out, "By the rivers of Babylon, there sat we down, yea we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song, and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" How plaintive this cry of the Hebrew captive by the waters of the Euphrates. But his idolatry was broken up. The stain was on his soul. David ceased to love murder when he saw his beautiful little boy suffer. When he wept over the manly, though wayward, misguided Absalom, cold in the embrace of death. "Would to God I had died for thee, Absalom, Oh Absalom, my son, my son." He found mercy in God's sight; favor there; the spot was gone. Our sins are of such a character that they leave a stain on the soul. Like the bad boy, his father said to him, "John, since you will not do right, I shall drive a nail in this post every time you do wrong and every time you do right draw one out. The nails will show your bad deeds, the holes your good ones." The post was soon full of nails. Not a hole to show one good deed. John saw it; his heart smote him. Such a multitude of evil deeds; not a good one in all the record. He resolved to do better; the nails came rapidly out. It came to the last one; his father said to him, "See John there is only one more nail in the post and now I am going to draw it out." John looked at the post all full of holes; the tears came to his eyes; he wept. His father inquired, why? John said, "True the nails are all out but the holes are still there." The holes were the marks of his sins. So with all the evil we do, it leaves a mark, a stain on the soul. We may repent; the sin be forgiven; the debt blotted out; the soul washed; but the spot is there. God alone can remove it; he only can cleanse the stain. It may be in the furnace of affliction. "No chastisement for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby."

Sin leaves an odor on the soul; an unpleasant scent. It is not the sweet-smelling savor of righteousness. Not like the frankincense of holy sacrifice. But like a dreadful stench in God's nostrils, rendering the soul offensive to Him. We all know that some odors do not yield to washing, they need something more purifying to remove them. Fire will do it. When I was a boy, I used to trap the woodchuck. But at times I caught a skunk instead of the game I was after. Then my trap was useless; the offensive smell must be removed. Washing failed, burying was useless. As a last resort I built a fire, suspended the trap over that and roasted it. That as a final process was effective. How many persons there are in this world, who go in pursuit of innocent pleasure, yet properly viewed in God's eyes it is hideous crime. The devil makes traps of us to catch skunks; Then we must have the odor from our souls before we are fit to work for God in the conversion of souls. We must pass through the fire of affliction. "Think it not strange, beloved, concerning the fiery trial that is to try you as if some strange thing had happened unto you."

Dear friends, let us try to realize our need and pray, as David did, for God's remedies in our case, so we may be free, be clean, and without stain or odor, but that we may truly be a delight in God's eyes.